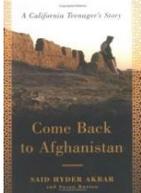


# YA Autobiographies

## **Abeel, Samantha. *My Thirteenth Winter* (2003). B ABEEL**

Samantha Abeel couldn't tell time, remember her locker combination, or count out change at a checkout counter -- and she was in seventh grade. For a straight-A student like Samantha, problems like these made no sense. She dreaded school, and began having anxiety attacks. In her thirteenth winter, she was diagnosed with a math-related learning disability—and found the courage to confront her problems. 203p.

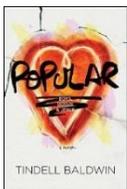


## **Akbar, Said Hyder. *Come Back to Afghanistan: A California Teenager's Story* (2005). 958.1047 AKB**

Hyder Akbar tells how his ordinary suburban California life was turned upside-down after 9/11. Hyder's father, a scion of an Afghan political family, sold his business—a hip-hop clothing store in Oakland—and left for Afghanistan, where he became President Hamid Karzai's chief spokesman and later, the governor of Kunar, a rural province. 339p.

## **Andrews, Arin. *Some Assembly Required: The Not-So-Secret Life of a Transgender Teen* (2014) (coming soon)**

Seventeen-year-old Arin Andrews shares all the hilarious, painful, and poignant details of undergoing gender reassignment as a high school student in this teen memoir. 256p.

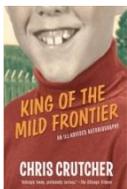


## **Baldwin, Tindell. *Popular: Boys, Booze, and Jesus* (2013). 277.3083 BAL**

Tindell details how she pursued popularity at all costs while climbing the social chain in high school. During a night of partying, she even encountered the man suspected of murdering another teen. Her story ultimately shows how she reconnected with her faith and found peace in her life. 272p.

## **Beyer, Ramsey. *Little Fish* (2013). YA F BEY (GRAPHIC NOVEL)**

Told through real-life journals, collages, lists, and drawings, this coming-of-age story illustrates the transformation of an 18-year-old girl from a small-town teenager into an independent city-dwelling college student. Written in an autobiographical style with beautiful artwork, *Little Fish* shows the challenges of being a young person facing the world on her own for the very first time and the unease—as well as excitement—that comes along with that challenge. 176p.

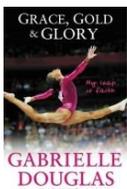
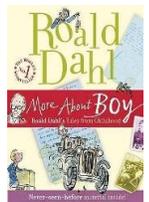


## **Crutcher, Chris. *King of the Mild Frontier: An Ill-Advised Autobiography* (2003). B Crutcher**

Chris Crutcher, author of young adult novels such as "Ironman" and "Whale Talk," as well as short stories, tells of growing up in Cascade, Idaho, and becoming a writer. 260p.

## **Dahl, Roald. *More About Boy: Roald Dahl's Tales from Childhood* (2009). J B DAHL**

Humorous anecdotes from the author's childhood describe summer vacations in Norway and life in an English boarding school. 223p.



## **Douglas, Gabrielle. *Grace, Gold and Glory: My Leap of Faith: The Gabrielle Douglas Story* (2012). 796.44 DOUGLAS**

The Olympic gold medalist shares the story of her life and how her faith allowed her to persevere and reach her dreams. 224p.

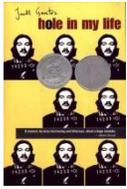
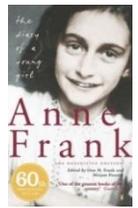
## **Earl, Esther. *This Star Won't Go Out: The Life and Words of Esther Grace Earl* (2014). 362.196994 EAR**

A collection of the journals, fiction, letters, and sketches of the late Esther Grace Earl, who passed away in 2010 at the age of 16. Photographs and essays by family and friends help to tell Esther's story along with an introduction by author John Green who dedicated his novel *The Fault in Our Stars* to her. 431p.



**Frank, Anne. *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1967). B FRANK**

A young girl's journal records her family's struggles during two years of hiding from the Nazis in war-torn Holland. 283p.



**Gantos, Jack. *Hole in My Life* (2002). B GANTOS**

The author relates how, as a young adult, he became a drug user and smuggler, was arrested, did time in prison, and eventually got out and went to college, all the while hoping to become a writer. 199p.

**Griner, Brittney. *In My Skin: My Life On and Off the Basketball Court* (2014). (coming soon)**

The No. 1 pick in the 2013 WNBA draft and Phoenix Mercury star recalls the painful episodes in her life and describes how she came to celebrate what makes her unique, in this inspirational biography that speaks to issues of gender, sexuality, body image and self-esteem. 304p.

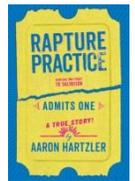


**Hall, Shyima. *Hidden Girl: The True Story of a Modern-Day Child Slave* (Jan 2014). J B Hall**

The author relates how she was sold by poor parents into slavery and forced to endure brutal servitude in California until a neighbor's anonymous call to the police began her journey to freedom and her subsequent efforts to fight for child slaves. 232p.

**Hartzler, Aaron. *Rapture Practice* (2013). 277.3 HAR**

Aaron Hartzler grew up in a home where he was taught that at any moment the Rapture could happen – and he was happy imagining that Jesus might come down any time and take his whole family up to Heaven. Eventually Aaron makes the plunge from do-gooder to full-fledged teen rebel. Whether he's sneaking out, making out, or playing hymns with a hangover, Aaron learns a few lessons that can't be found in the Bible. He discovers that the best friends aren't always the ones your mom and dad approve of, the girl of your dreams can just as easily be the boy of your dreams, and the tricky part about believing is that no one can do it for you. 390p.

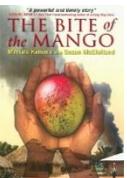


**Hillman, Laura. *I Will Plant You a Lilac Tree: A Memoir of a Schindler's List Survivor* (2005). 940.53 HIL**

Presents the true story of a young girl from a Polish ghetto who was sent to a series of concentration camps and survived the war after being placed on Schindler's List, finally marrying a fellow survivor. 243p.

**James, Kelle. *Smile for the Camera* (2010). (coming soon...)**

A true story of escaping abuse and adversity in a small town only to encounter more of it in the big city, and the exceptional story of a teen model who lost--then found--herself as she struggled to survive. 392p.

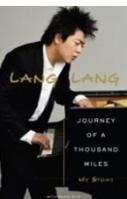
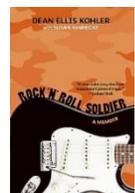


**Kamara, Mariatu. *The Bite of the Mango* (2008). (coming soon...)**

The author, who lived in a small rural village in Sierra Leone, recounts how tasting the nectar of a mango gave her the will to live after surviving a brutal attack by heavily armed rebel soldiers and living in a refugee camp. 216p.

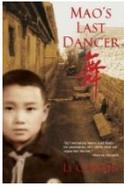
**Kohler, Dean Ellis. *Rock 'n' Roll Soldier* (2009). (coming soon)**

A memoir about starting a rock band in the middle of a war zone. Drafted into the Vietnam War, Kohler formed "Electrical Banana" with a few fellow draftees and enjoyed a wildly popular run of gigs, including a performance on the front lines, before returning home to restart his music career. 288p.



**Lang, Lang. *Journey of a Thousand Miles* (2008). 786.2 LANG**

Details the musical odyssey of a talented young Chinese piano prodigy, from his youth in an industrial city in northern China, through the dedication and sacrifice that marked his musical education, to his global triumph in the world of classical music. 256p.

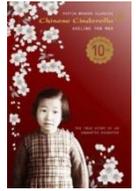


**Li, Cunxin. *Mao's Last Dancer* (2008). J 792.8 LI**

Chosen from millions of children to serve in Mao's cultural revolution by studying at the Beijing Dance Academy, Li knew ballet would be his family's best opportunity to escape the bitter poverty in his rural China home. From one hardship to another, Li persevered, never forgetting the family he left behind. 290p.

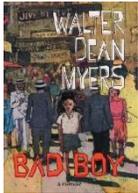
**Mah, Adeline Yen. *Chinese Cinderella: The True Story of an Unwanted Daughter* (2001). 979.4 MAH**

The daughter of a wealthy Hong Kong businessman describes her very difficult childhood and the psychological abuse she suffered at the hands of her stepmother. 205p.



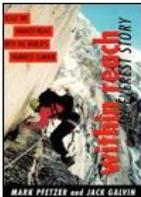
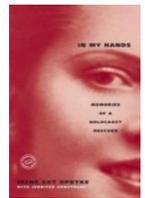
**Myers, Walter Dean. *Bad Boy: A Memoir* (2001). B MYERS**

The author relates his experiences growing up in Harlem, the home of Sugar Ray Robinson and Langston Hughes, in the 1940s and 1950s. 214p.



**Opdyke, Irene Gut. *In My Hands: Memories of a Holocaust Rescuer* (1999). 940.5318 OPD**

Recounts the experiences of the author who, as a young Polish girl, hid and saved Jews during the Holocaust. 276p.

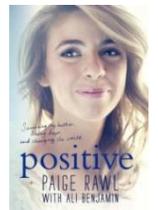


**Pfitzer, Mark. *Within Reach: My Everest Story* (1998). 796.522 PFE**

The author describes how he spent his teenage years climbing mountains in the United States, South America, Africa, and Asia, with an emphasis on his two expeditions up Mount Everest. 224p.

**Rawl, Paige. *Positive: Surviving my Bullies, Finding Hope, and Living to Change the World: A Memoir* (2014). (coming soon)**

A teenager's memoir of the experiences of bullying, being HIV positive and surviving the experiences to become a force for positive change in this world. 288p.

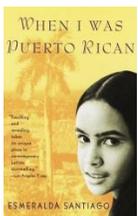


**Rhodes-Courter, Ashley. *Three Little Words* (2008). 362.733 RHO**

Traces the author's painful childhood in a series of foster homes, her deteriorating relationship with her emotionally unstable mother, abuse at the hands of a foster family, and her subsequent efforts to advocate for an improved foster care system. 304p.

**Runyon, Brent. *The Burn Journals* (2004). 362.28 RUN**

The author recounts the year he spent in a burn unit following his suicide attempt at fourteen, describing the painful treatments, skin-grafting procedures, rehabilitation, and psychotherapy. 374p.



**Santiago, Esmeralda. *When I was Puerto Rican* (1993). B SANTIAGO**

Magic, sexual tension, high comedy, and intense drama move through an enchanted yet harsh life chronicle, as a young girl leaves rural Puerto Rico for New York's tenements and a chance for success. 274p.

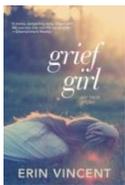
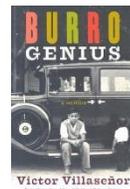
**Stokke, Regine. *Regine's Book: A Teen Girl's Last Words* (2014). 362.1969 STO**

Seventeen-year-old Regine Stokke began to blog about her day-to-day life shortly after she was diagnosed with leukemia in 2008 to give people a sense of "what it's like to live with" such a serious illness, and her blog became an almost instant classic. Her work was first adapted into book form in 2010, and became a bestseller in her home country of Norway. 329p.



**Villasenor, Victor. *Burro Genius* (2004). 813.54 VILLASENOR**

The author describes his struggles with cultural discrimination and an untreated learning disability, recounting his victimization as a non-English-speaking Latino in an American school system and his eventual rise to an award-winning writer. 320p.

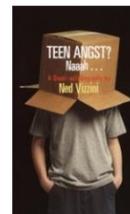


**Vincent, Erin. *Grief Girl: My True Story* (2007). (coming soon...)**

The author describes how her parents were killed in a car accident when she was a teenager, and how she and her seventeen-year-old sister and three-year-old brother were left to deal with the pain and hardship while they struggled to survive on their own. 306p.

**Vizzini, Ned. *Teen Angst? Naaah: A Quasi-Autobiography* (2002). 305.235 VIZ**

A collection of essays written by the author from age fifteen to seventeen in which he shares impressions of school, sports, cool people, boring people, friends, family, money, music, and obsessions. 279p.

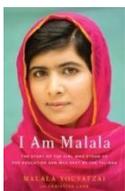


**Wasdin, Howard E. *I am a SEAL Team Six Warrior: Memoirs of an American Soldier* (2012). 359.0092 WADIN**

Recounts the story of how the author overcame a tough and abusive childhood to fulfill his dream of joining the exciting and dangerous world of the Navy SEALs by becoming a Special Forces sniper. 182p.

**Woodson, Jacqueline. *Brown Girl Dreaming* (Aug 2014) (coming soon)**

One of today's finest writers tells the moving story of her childhood in mesmerizing verse. Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement. 240p.



**Yousafzai, Malala. *I am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban* (2013). 371.822 YOU**

Describes the life of a young Pakistani student who advocated for women's rights and education in the Taliban-controlled Swat Valley who survived an assassination attempt and became the youngest nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize. 327p.

**Zindel, Paul. *The Pigman & Me* (1991). B Zindel**

An account of beloved YA author Paul Zindel's teenage years on Staten Island, when his life was enriched by finding his own personal pigman, or mentor. 179p.



\*This is a list of new and popular autobiographies written for and/or of interest to teens, available at the Whittier Public Library. This list is not exhaustive. Please talk to a librarian if you have any questions of if there is a specific person or subject you are interested in, or if you have any questions. Most of the titles on this list are very close to or above the 200-page minimum requirement of many high school level assignments. Page counts are included in book descriptions. Some titles are on order as of the printing of this list (indicated with "coming soon" instead of a call number), so if you are interested in one of these, please check the library catalog online, or ask a librarian to see if the title has become available.

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